

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 CU-04 OMB-01 NIC-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /141 W

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R 241255Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6228

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 7224

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, CB

SUBJECT: GKR ARRESTS TEACHERS; STUDENTS REACT

REF: PHNOM PENH 6880

1. SUMMARY: IN AN EFFORT TO HAMSTRING TEACHER/STUDENT ANTI-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS, THE GKR YESTERDAY (MAY 23) MOUNTED AN OPERATION TO ARREST THREE BKAXWIAKNHER/# STUDENT LEADERS. ONLY ONE, PEN MANIL, PRESIDENT OF THE MIXED TEACHERS' COMMITTEE, WAS NETTED. IN A RELATIVELY LOW-KEY MAY 24 PRESS CONFERENCE SECONDDDARY STUDENT LEADER EA PORLY DEMANDED MANIL'S RELEASE AS WELL AS THE RELEASE OF TWO SMALLER FISH PICKED UP EARLIER THIS WEEK. HE ALSO PROMISED THAT CURRENT STUDENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS WILL CONTINUE. THE INFORMATION MINISTER YESTERDAY HINTED AT GROUNDS FOR THE ARRESTS WHEN HE RE-EMPHASIZED THAT PERSONS BREAKING THE DECREE RESTRICTING FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY WILL BE ARRESTED. IN A RELATED MOVE, PARLIAMENT PLANS TO SHOW CONFIDENCE IN THE GKR'S PUBLIC ORDER MEASURES TOMORROW (MAY 25).

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END SUMMARY.

2. POLICE ARRESTED MIXED TEACHERS' COMMITTEE PRESIDENT PEN MANIL (AKA PEN MONIL) ON THE AFTERNOON OF MAY 23. EARLIER IN THE WEEK THE POLICE HAD PICKED UP KHMER TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION PHNOM PENH BRANCH OFFICERS YI YON AND OUL CHAND. THE GKR HAS NOT ANNOUNCED THE ARRESTS, AND THE SPECIFIC GROUNDS FOR THE ACTION ARE NOT YET KNOWN. TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, HOWEVER, SPECULATED THAT THE JUSTIFICATION MAY BE TIED IN WITH THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION'S MAY 23 POINTED REFERENCE (FBIS D231615) TO RECENTLY DECREED RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY UNDER PROVISIONS OF THE "NATION IN DANGER" LAE. (LEADERS ARRESTED AND SOUGHT SEEM CLEARLY TO HAVE VIOLATED THESE RESTRICTIONS.)

3. THE ARRESTS SPARKED A MAY 24 PRESS CONFERENCE AT LYCEE 18 MARS AT WHICH SECONDARY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT EA PORLY (AKA IE POLY) DEMANDED THE RELEASE OF THE THREE. HE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST BE READY TO ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARRESTS. PRLY REAFFIRMED THAT PLANS TO HOLD A POPULAR CONGRESS (REF B) WILL CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD. ACCORDING TO OUR KHMER POLITICAL ASSISTANT, PRLY'S RHETORIC AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS RELATIVELY LOW KEY. BOTH OF THE MIXED TEACHERS' COMMITTEE VICE-PRESIDENTS FLANKED THE STUDENT LEADER, BUT THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION FAILED TO JOIN IN THIS SHOW OF SOLIDARITY.

4. GENDARMERIE NATIONALE FORCES HAVE SURROUNDED LYCEE 18 MARS PRESUMABLY TO ENSURE ORDER. NO SIGNS POINT TO STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AT THE MOMENT.

5. ACCORDING TO AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES, THE GKR HAD PLANNED TO ARREST UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT LOCH SOEUN AND SECONDARY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT EA PORLY AT THE SAME TIME THEY ARRESTED PEN MANIL. LOCH SOEUN, HOWEVER, HAS NOT BEEN FOUND, AND EA PORLY, WHO HAS BEEN LIVING AT LYCEE 18 MARS, IS DIFFICULT TO ARREST BECAUSE HE IS SURROUNDED BY FELLOW STUDENTS. ALTHOUGH THE CHARGE AGAINST THESE LEADERS MAY INITIALLY BE VIOLATION OF RESTRICTIONS ON ASSEMBLY, WE UNDERSTAND THE GOVERNMENT HAS COMPILED DOSSIERS INDICATING SUBVERSIVE CONTACTS ON THE PART OF ALL THREE.

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6. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL RELIABLE SOURCES, THE TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT ARE TO MEET TOMORROW IN CONGRESS TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPTS TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER. MINISTER FOR REFUGEES THACH TOAN TELLS US THEY MAY ALSO RATIFY DECREES ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTING RESTRICTIONS (INCLUDING THAT ON PUBLIC ASSEMBLY) PERMITTED UNDER THE "NATION IN DANGER" LEGISLATION ALREADY PASSED BY

PARLIAMENT. (ALTHOUGH THESE DECREES ARE EFFECTIVE FOR THREE MONTHS WITHOUT PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL, EARLY RATIFICATION WOULD SYMBOLIZE STRONG LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT.)

7. COMMENT: THE GKR OPERATION TO PICK UP KEY TEACHER/ STUDENT AGITATORS WOULD SEEM AT THIS MOMENT TO HAVE BEEN INEPTLY HANDLED BECAUSE IT LEFT AT LARGE STUDENT FIGURES CAPABLE OF EXCITING EMOTIONS AGAINST SUCH ACTION. REACTION SO FAR HAS BEEN FAIRLY SUBDUED BUT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY GROW IN VOLUME. APART FROM THE EXPRESSION OF PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT TOMORROW, A KEY FACTOR IN CONTROLLING THIS REACTION WILL BE THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESENTATION OF ITS CASE AGAINST PAN MANIL.
DEAN

NOTE BY OC/T: # AS RECEIVED.

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